DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 302 685 CE 051 706

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TITLE Education and the Global Marketplace.
PUB DATE 3 Dec 88
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the American Vocational Association Convention (St. Louis, MO, December 3, 1988).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Economic Development; *Educational Practices; Employer Employee Relationship; *Employment Practices; Foreign Countries; Futures (of Society); *Job Training; *Organizational Climate; Postsecondary Education; *Productivity; *Retraining; Secondary Education; Technological Advancement
IDENTIFIERS *Honda of America

ABSTRACT

Honda of America is part of a global company that strives to be competitive all over the world. In order to maintain and increase its competitiveness, the company focuses intensely on training and retraining its workers and on fostering team spirit. The company maintains extensive training facilities that offer many courses to employees. Employees learn new jobs often, even twice a year. In addition, hundreds of employees go to Japan every year for training in new manufacturing processes. Honda's commitment to education is symbolized by its "racing spirit," taken from its auto racing success. The "racing spirit" philosophy has five components: (1) seek the challenge; (2) be ready on time; (3) teamwork; (4) quick response; and (5) winner take all. These principles can be applied to education; educators can use them to prepare students for the realities and opportunities of the more competitive global environment of tomorrow. (KC)

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EDUCATION AND THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

An Address By

Allen O. Kinzer, Vice President
Honda of America Manufacturing, Inc.

At The 1988 American Vocational Association
National Convention

Saturday, December 3, 1988

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Good Morning.

It is indeed a pleasure to be with you here today. My topic of discussion is "Education And The Global Marketplace."

First I would like to tell you about the industry I represent and then discuss specific elements of the challenges we face in the field of education and training.

I am here today as one team member of more than six thousand, five hundred men and women of Honda of America Manufacturing in central Ohio who every day produce 1,500 automobiles, more than 100 motorcycles, and about 600 engines for both automobiles and motorcycles for worldwide customer satisfaction.

Honda of America is a very young company. We celebrated our 9th anniversary of production this year.

In fact, Honda worldwide is a young company. This year, Honda celebrated its 40th anniversary and only its 25th year of auto manufacturing. Yet as a company we are already realizing one of our long term strategies, which is to become a truly international motor vehicle company. We now have 75 manufacturing facilities in 40 countries. More than half of Honda's associates -- about 30,000 -- are located outside Japan.

The Honda Accord automobile we manufacture at the Marysville Auto Plant is also manufactured in 6 other countries and sold in 73 countries! No other car can make such a statement!

In fact, Honda's international presence is the result of our company philosophy which guides us to manufacture products in the markets where they are sold.

This type of International Corporation, as you can imagine, brings with it many problems, challenges, and opportunities.

How can we have international goals? How can we share technology and know-how on a global basis? What is the best way to share results of new manufacturing methods or advances in product design? How can we efficiently and cost-effectively trade component parts of equal high quality with each other?

One way to address these concerns is to have a philosophy which emphasizes an international viewpoint -- a philosophy which mixes the global view with a local view. We call this Honda point of view "GLOCAL."

Just 10 days ago, I was in Japan to attend our International Conference on Global Production Issues. Attending this conference were Honda associates from fifteen countries representing 30 manufacturing facilities. They came from Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Italy, Spain, France, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, India, Pakistan, and of course Japan and the United States.

Each of these plants has a unique character and different concerns, yet many concerns were similar. The one concern that everyone expressed -- a "GLOCAL" concern -- was education and training of associates.

They didn't mean only training for new associates. They meant training to upgrade the abilities of all associates to produce world-class quality products. They meant training in new technology, new skills, and new understandings of global economics and business practices.

So you can see that some of the challenges facing you as <u>Educators</u> are the same ones we face within the world of Honda. Each manufacturing operation within each country must develop its own <u>local</u> methods in education and training to meet the needs of the <u>global</u> international corporation.

At Honda of America Manufacturing, our 6,500 associates build motorcycles, automobiles and engines at two plants in Marysville and one at Anna, Ohio. We have invested and committed a total of 1.7 billion dollars in Ohio with the intention of becoming a self-reliant global motor vehicle company in the United States.

We started manufacturing in the United States in 1979, long before the present-day concerns about trade deficits or a weak dollar. In fact, I joined the company in 1978 when there were only four other members, all Japanese.

I realized then that we faced a tremendous challenge and an equally great opportunity -- how to build a new company from the ground floor, a company that would embody the best U.S. and Japanese practices, a company that would offer opportunities for growth and personal development to all its employees or associates regardless of age, race or national origin, a company which would be both a leader in manufacturing efficiency and a leader in employee involvement.

I realized that our success depended in large part on our ability to be <u>educators</u>. We had a teaching job on our hands, and not just teaching how to build a quality Honda motorcycle, car or engine.

Our associates needed to know why quality was so important, why it was necessary to listen to the customer, and how the auto industry was about to become so competitive that not every manufacturer would survive intact.

In short, our associates had to learn how to work together as one team, how to build the best and strongest team in the motor vehicle industry.

To help our associates reach that goal, we have committed our resources to one of the most comprehensive education, training and involvement programs in the industry. We allocate more than two-and-a-half million dollars a year to the in-house training and education of our associates. We have constructed a three million dollar Associate Development Center to be a resource and a focus for these programs.

At Honda of America, it is not uncommon for our associates to learn many different jobs, often one or two new jobs a year. Each day, we have at least 80 full-time associates attending classroom training and updating their skills to be more competitive.

Currently we have 31 members in our Associate Development group, including 14 full-time instructors and 7 part-time.

Some examples of our curriculum are:

NH-Circle Training
Management Training
Quality Methods And Systems
Safety Training
Japanese Classes
English Classes
Xcellence Training
Analytical Problem Solving
Better Communication
How To Lead Meetings
Project Management
Motivating Your Team
Problem Solving & Decision Making
Time Management
Mathematics and Measurement
Blueprint Reading
Maintenance Training

In addition to all this classroom training, hundreds of our associates each year go to Japan for specific training in job processes for 4 weeks to 6 weeks. Other associates will stay in Japan for up to 2 years.

Located at our Associate Development Center is a branch of Columbus State Community College, which means Honda associates can complete a two-year associate degree at our own Center.

Our associates have also responded through their involvement in the many suggestion and quality improvement programs at Honda of America. It is their commitment to continuous training and development programs which have made them one of the most flexible, quality oriented teams in American industry.

Although Honda of America Manufacturing is now America's fourth largest automaker, our sights are not set solely on the U.S. market. We intend to be competitive in the global marketplace. We already are exporting Ohio-built cars and motorcycles to nations around the world, including Japan and Taiwan.

It is not enough to be competitive in Ohio or in the United States. Today's economy is a world economy, with a network of international interconnections among business and industry leaders.

Our associates have learned first-hand about the international marketplace. They understand their competition comes from Japan, and Malaysia, and Korea, and Mexico, as well as Europe and the United States. They have acquired an international point-of-view.

There is within Honda a spirit which we call the Racing Spirit. It comes, in part, from Honda's winning experience in Formula One Grand Prix racing around the world.

The Racing Spirit teaches five lessons which are as valuable and appropriate to business or to the educational challenge before us as they are on the track. Let me cite the basic five principles:

1) SEEK THE CHALLENGE -- By seeking out and finding our competitors, we become motivated to do our absolute best.

2) BE READY ON TIME -- Unless you are at the starting line when the gun goes off, you cannot participate in the race.

3) TEAMWORK -- In a race, it is teamwork among the driver, the mechanics and the engineers that generally determines success or failure.

4) QUICK RESPONSE -- Racing, like life, is unpredictable. When a problem arises, a solution must be found immediately. If it is a problem you have never seen before, you must have the flexibility to create a new solution on the spot.

5) WINNER TAKE ALL -- Winning the race is the final goal, and there can be only one winner. We believe we must concentrate every effort and every resource to achieve that goal.

The Racing Spirit is a simple philosophy, easy to understand but difficult to follow. It requires great effort, dedication and adherence to its unyielding principles.

As educators, we must do nothing less. We must help to forge a new understanding of this global marketplace. We must prepare students for the realities and opportunities of this more competitive environment and help them learn how to build a winning team.

The race is on.

Do you want to win?

Then let's go!

Thank you.